

MOVIE: “12 Angry Men (1957)”
Sub Topic Theme:

Response: Dealing With Angry People

Lesson Objective:

The purpose of this large group time together is to help students understand how to work with and deal with people who are angry. Often times it can feel

like an impossible task as we will see in this movie, but there are effective ways of handling different situations.


Intro to the Movie:

12 Angry Men (1957)

According to IMDB.com

12 Angry Men focuses on a jury's deliberations in a capital murder case. A 12-man jury is sent to begin deliberations in the first-degree murder trial of an 18-year-old Latino accused in the stabbing death of his father, where a guilty verdict means an automatic death sentence. The case appears to be open-and-shut: The defendant has a weak alibi; a knife he claimed to have lost is found at the murder scene; and several witnesses either heard screaming, saw the killing or the boy fleeing the scene. Eleven of the jurors immediately vote guilty; only Juror No. 8 (Mr. Davis) casts a not guilty vote. At first Mr. Davis bases his vote more so for the sake of discussion; after all, the jurors must believe beyond a reasonable doubt that the defendant is guilty. As the deliberations unfold, the story quickly becomes a study of the jurors' complex personalities (which range from wise, bright and empathetic to arrogant, prejudiced and merciless), preconceptions, backgrounds and interactions. That provides the backdrop to Mr. Davis' attempts in convincing the other jurors that a "not guilty" verdict might be appropriate.

(The 3D Lenses) This movie was chosen to watch because of the intense scenario that these 12 men have been put into. While students will most likely never have been put in this situation, chances are they have been in a situation where they feel like everything is on the line; it always brings out the worst and the best in people. The focus is Juror number 8 and the way that he interacts with each of the different jurors. He is very aware of each of them because he has taken the time to observe them and understand them. When we take the time to understand others, it is amazing how well we can learn how to interact with them.

Discussion Group Questions:

1. Why do you think the jury was so quick to vote guilty? What made number 8 say not guilty first?
2. What did you notice was different about number 8? We all want to think that we would be like number 8, but if you had to pick one of the other 11, which one would you relate most to?
3. Have you ever felt like you were in the same position as number 8? Dealing with a lot of angry and impatient people? If so, what did you do? How did things work out?
4. Did you notice number 8 defusing situations or handling anger pushed his way?
5. What were some of the different personal reasons jurors had for not changing their minds? How was that addressed?

Group input:

Leader-solicited responses from the large group on reactions to some of the questions.

Gathering of ideas and themes recognized in the discussion groups with a focus on guiding the audience toward the main objective: *The purpose of this large group time together is to help students understand how to work with and deal with people who are angry. Often times it can feel like an impossible task as we will see in this movie, but there are effective ways of handling different situations.*

Bullet Objective:

Put this summary section in your own words, but here are some ideas you can use:

A lot took place in this movie; you got to see a whole case unfold. Got to learn about the case in a very nontraditional, but interesting way as the case slowly unfolded and different points were hashed out and disproved. What I really love about the movie, however, is being able to watch and learn from juror number 8. He is so quiet in the beginning. You don't really notice him; you're wondering who will be the one to step up or to cause delays. Maybe the guy who took forever in the bathroom, maybe the guy who says he has been on tons of juries, or the older gentleman; but there is something to learn from his quiet approach.

I think there are a lot of things we can take away from his approach. First, he was patient. He didn't try to convince everyone; he knew it would take time; he wasn't even sure what he thought yet, but he was smart enough to know that it couldn't be as simple as it seemed. Second, he was patient with the other men. He didn't know each of their

stories, but he knew enough to know that people were coming from all different places and *he met them where they were*. For example, the older gentleman. He understood his age and persuaded him by pointing out the testimony of the older man and how it could be a little off. The guy who came from a rough part of town; not everyone from the other side is bad. The painter who did a job in a similar setting; how loud are the trains? Crazy loud! One by one, he picked something they understood and gave them reasonable doubt, but that took time, patience and most importantly wisdom!

Juror number 8 was also very wise when dealing with angry people. Going in guns drawn would not have helped these guys figure things out. It was being careful with his words, not pushing too hard and being honest about where he stood. We saw this especially in the beginning. He said something to the effect that, he didn't know what he thought yet, but he thought this boy deserved at least an hour of their time trying to figure it out. They respected his willingness to be honest even if they didn't like it.

Juror 8 was patient, wise, met the angry men where they were at and he was honest with them--all good things to take away from the movie. Scripture also talks about anger in many different places. One of the passages that I really like is 1 Samuel 24.

In this passage we see that Saul is after David; not just after him, but he wants to kill him! I guess you could say it's safe to say King Saul is angry with David. When we meet up with these two people though we see something interesting take place. Listen to this passage,; pay attention to what happens and learn what you can from David and his response.

1 Samuel 24

David Spares Saul's Life

When Saul came back from fighting the Philistines, he was told that David was in the wilderness near Engedi. Saul took three thousand of the best soldiers in Israel and went looking for David and his men east of Wild Goat Rocks. He came to a cave close to some sheep pens by the road and went in to relieve himself. It happened to be the very cave in which David and his men were hiding far back in the cave. They said to him, "This is your chance! The LORD has told you that he would put your enemy in your power and you could do to him whatever you wanted to." David crept over and cut off a piece of Saul's robe without Saul's knowing it. But then David's conscience began to hurt, and he said to his men, "May the LORD keep me from doing any harm to my master, whom the LORD chose as king! I must not harm him in the least, because he is the king chosen by the LORD!" So David convinced his men that they should not attack Saul.

Saul got up, left the cave, and started away. Then David went out after him and called to him, "Your Majesty!" Saul turned around, and David bowed down to the ground in respect and said, "Why do you listen to people who say that I am trying to harm you? You can see for yourself that just now in the cave the LORD put you in my power. Some of my men told me to kill you, but I felt sorry for you and said that I would not harm you in the least, because you are the one whom the LORD chose to be king. Look, my father, look at the piece of your robe I am holding! I could have killed you, but

instead I only cut this off. This should convince you that I have no thought of rebelling against you or of harming you. You are hunting me down to kill me, even though I have not done you any wrong. May the LORD judge which one of us is wrong! May he punish you for your action against me, for I will not harm you in the least. You know the old saying, ‘Evil is done only by evil people.’ And so I will not harm you. Look at what the king of Israel is trying to kill! Look at what he is chasing! A dead dog, a flea! The LORD will judge, and he will decide which one of us is wrong. May he look into the matter, defend me, and save me from you.”

When David had finished speaking, Saul said, “Is that really you, David my son?” And he started crying. Then he said to David, “You are right, and I am wrong. You have been so good to me, while I have done such wrong to you! Today you have shown how good you are to me, because you did not kill me, even though the LORD put me in your power. How often does someone catch an enemy and then let him get away unharmed? The LORD bless you for what you have done to me today! Now I am sure that you will be king of Israel and that the kingdom will continue under your rule. But promise me in the LORD’s name that you will spare my descendants, so that my name and my family’s name will not be completely forgotten.” David promised that he would.

Then Saul went back home, and David and his men went back to their hiding place.

Isn’t it crazy how David chooses not to kill King Saul! Saul was angry, wanted to kill David. Had Saul been dead, David could have taken the throne as promised by God... things would have worked out, but David understood that Saul was just angry and that this wasn’t the way God wanted to do things. Instead David chose to have faith that God would protect him while stepping out in faith to confront a very angry man. Anything could have happened; but David had faith in God, spoke with wisdom and did not act out of anger or revenge. All things we can learn from David.

Hopefully, this is something you can relate to. Maybe you are dealing with some people right now that just drive you crazy or maybe they always seem to be angry. Take what you have learned here and apply it to your life. This next challenge section should help you do that if you don’t know where to start.

Challenge:

1. Who in your life is full of anger? Take some time to think about how you can come along side of them and show them their anger. Remember to be wise, to pray that God would guide you and protect you. If you’re not sure, talk it over with a trusted adult. You may not change a person, but you can show them something that maybe they did not see before.
2. Think back to the last juror to change his mind. Remember the story he told earlier in the movie, about his son he hadn’t seen in years...remember the picture he shredded before bursting into tears and finally saying not guilty. Each person you come across and especially angry people have a story to share. There is a

reason they act and feel that way. It's sort of like what Shrek says, you just have to be able to pull back one layer of the onion/person at a time. Don't expect them to share everything with you the first time; but by being their friend and truly caring, who knows how God will use you to bring healing in their life. If you know an especially angry person, begin by praying for opportunity to know them better. It all starts with an introduction and a few things in common. Find this person and meet them where they are.

3. Remember David and Saul. It would have been easy to kill Saul, but that isn't what God desired for David or for us. Next time a person gets angry with you, don't respond with matched and elevated anger; respond the way that David did. Be wise, speak softly and share truth. Think back to the last time an angry person got in your face. Write out how it went and how it could have gone better; then remember this for next time.

Pray for God's purpose and love to put it into action and transform lives. Remind them of the online personal journey at ReZilient Life for further involvement with this topic of Anger-Destruction-Dealing With Angry People!